

Can I pray while sitting?

What is permissible and what is not



Muhammad Nabeel Musharraf

AUSTRALIAN ISLAMIC LIBRARY

www.australianislamiclibrary.org
www.facebook.com/australianislamiclibrary



“

[O You who Believe, fear Allah. And let every soul look to what it has sent on for tomorrow. Fear Allah, surely Allah is well-acquainted with what you do. And do not be like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget their own souls. Such are the rebellious transgressors.]
(Al-Hashr 59:18-19)

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم
كل معروف صدقة، والدال على الخير كفاعله
(البخارى ومسلم)

من دعا إلى هدى كان له من الأجر مثل أجور من تبعه لا ينقص ذلك من أجورهم شيئاً
(مسلم)
وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْغَدْوَانِ
جزاك الله

Support Australian Islamic Library reach all Muslims across the globe with essential Islamic information and be our partner in collecting provisions for the hereafter, inshaAllah.

Australian Islamic Library
www.australianislamiclibrary.org
www.facebook.com/australianislamiclibrary

Compiled by: Muhammad Nabeel Musharraf for Australian Islamic Library



Can I pray while sitting? by Australian Islamic Library is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Licence Conditions:
Share Alike,
Attribute to Australian Islamic Library,
Non-Commercial Use only

ISBN: 978-1-329-57671-1

ISBN 9781329576711



First printed in: September 2015
By Australian Islamic Library
Through *lulu.com*

Table of contents

Foreword	7
Praying according to one's ability	8
Is there any condition associated with praying while sitting? If I can stand in prayer, can I still choose to sit if I have a minor discomfort?	10
If I am unable to stand, can I offer prayer sitting?	13
What if I cannot stand but can still do "Rukoo" and "Sujood"?	19
I don't have a valid excuse to offer prayer while sitting. Can I still offer voluntary salah (nafil) while sitting?	25
Where should I place my chair in row (saff) while praying?	27
What sort of chair should I use?	31
What if I start the prayer standing but cannot continue to stand for the whole time?	32
I cannot stand by myself, but I can stand in prayer with the help of a support? Should I still stand?	33
What is the "difficulty" which makes it permissible to pray sitting down?	34
I have a valid excuse for not being able to stand in prayer. Shall I sit on chair or on ground?	39

If I am praying while sitting, where should I put my hands while doing 'Rukoo' and 'Sujood'	44
I do not have a mosque at my place of work. I pray in my sitting on driving seat. Is my prayer valid?	47
Would my prayer be acceptable if I pray behind an Imam sitting on chair? Is it permissible for Imam to lead prayer like this?	50
Should I leave some gap from the first few rows if I am offering prayer while sitting on chair?	58
Can we pray salat while in a moving car that's because there is no place to stop and pray?	64
Sometimes I get a headache and I cannot pray except by means of gestures. I do not prostrate because of this headache with which I cannot prostrate. What is the ruling on this?	68
How can a pregnant women pray if she cannot complete all parts of salah in correct manner?	70
How can a patient who has a catheter do wudoo' and pray?	74
How can a person who is partially paralyzed do wudoo' and pray?	77

Foreword

Recently there has been much debate on issue of using chairs for offering prayers and ruling associated with this. With the spirit to benefit elderly Muslims and those who need to use chair to offer prayer, we have compiled this book containing rulings from various scholars.

We hope this collection would clarify any doubts in this less-discussed area and become a beneficial resource for those who want to know associated details and ruling regarding praying on chair.

Praying according to one's ability

(Context presented by Sheikh Salih Al-Fawzan in response to a question)

Prayer is the second pillar of Islaam. It is the foundational support-post of Islaam, and it is the first of all deeds a person will be held to account for on the Day of Judgment. If it is accepted [by Allaah], the rest of his deeds will be accepted. If it is rejected, the rest of his deeds will likewise be rejected. It is an obligation that no Muslim is ever excused from so long as he remains of sound mind. A Muslim prays according to his ability.

As Allaah has said, “Fear Allaah to the best of your ability.” And He, the Most High, has said, “Allaah does not burden any soul beyond its scope.” Furthermore, the Prophet, may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace, said, “When I have forbidden you from something, stay away from it [entirely]. When I have ordered you to do something, do as much of it as you are able.”

From this [generality] is prayer. A Muslim is to pray to the best of his ability, the best he can, due to the statement of the Prophet, may Allaah raise his rank and grant him peace, “A sick person prays standing. If he is unable, then he may pray sitting. If he is unable, then he may pray [laying] on his side.” In one narration, “If he is unable, then laying back with his feet toward the qiblah.”

Prayer has its required conditions (shuroot), necessary elements (arkaan, lit. pillars), obligations (waajibaat), and recommended manners (sunan). A sick person is to do as much of these things as he is able to. Some things are to be done while standing, while others are done while sitting or in prostration.

What is done standing is the initial takbeerah (saying, "Allaahu akbar"), reading [Soorah] Al-Faatihah and whatever else is easy of the Qur'aan, and bowing (rukoo'), which is done by bending over with one's head and back until the hands reach the knees, saying in that position, "Glorified be Allaah, the Great One."

What is done while sitting is the tashahhud, the prostration, saying, "Glorified be Allaah, the Most High," and the tasleem.

Is there any condition associated with praying while sitting? If I can stand in prayer, can I still choose to sit if I have a minor discomfort?

(Response from Sheikh Salih Al-Munajjid)

Standing is an essential part of the prayer, and if a person does not stand during the prayer, from the initial takbeer to the final salaam, and has no valid excuse for that, his prayer is invalid.¹ Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “And stand before Allaah with obedience” [al-Baqarah 2:238].

The rule that standing is an essential part of the prayer applies especially to the fard (obligatory) prayers; it is not obligatory to stand in the naafil prayers, in which sitting is permitted, but the one who sits will have half of the reward of one who stands.

¹ While responding to a question where a school student asked if could pray on chair as he was not able to find a suitable place to pray, group of Mufti's on onislam.net gave the same response and informed the questioner that prayer would not be valid if required acts in Salah are not performed while being capable to do so.

The evidence that this rule applies only to the fard prayers is the hadeeth in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Pray standing." (al-Bukhaari, 1066).

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to pray naafil prayers (sitting) on a saddle, but when he wanted to pray a fard prayer, he would get down off his saddle (al-Bukhaari, 955; Muslim, 700), so that he could fulfil the essential conditions of the prayer, i.e., standing and facing the qiblah.

If a person prays a naafil prayer sitting, when he is able to stand, he will have half of the reward of one who stands. 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Umar narrated that he said to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), "I was told, O Messenger of Allaah, that you said that the prayer of one who prays sitting down is equal to half of the prayer of one who prays standing, but you pray sitting down." He said, "That is right, but I am not like one of you." (From the hadeeth narrated by Muslim, 735).

Al-Nawawi said, commenting on this hadeeth: this hadeeth is to be understood as meaning that a naafil prayer done sitting down when one is able to stand will bring half of the reward of one who prays standing. But if a person prays a naafil prayer sitting down because he is unable to stand, his reward will not be reduced, and he will have the same reward as one who prays standing. With regard to Fard prayers, if a person prays sitting down when he is able to stand, his prayer will not be valid

and he will not get any reward for it, in fact this is counted as a sin. (Sharh Muslim. 6/258)

So we say to those who sit on the chairs and do not stand during the fard prayers: it is not permissible for you to sit on your chairs when you are able to stand, unless it would be so difficult for you as to cause harm, but a slight difficulty is no excuse.

(Responded by Darul-Iftaa of "Jamiah Islaamiyah Maseehul-Uloom, Bangalore)

It is impermissible for a person with average pain (which is bearable) to perform Salaah in a seated position.

فان لحقه نوع مشقة لم يجز ترك ذلك القيام

“If one experiences the average slight difficulty, it is impermissible for such a person to abandon the standing position due to such a minor inconvenience” (Shaami)

If we analyze the situation today of Salaah being performed on a chair, we would find the majority invalidating their Salaah. The same majority who are seen attending their daily needs, standing, walking and roaming around throughout the day, yet when Salaah approaches, they become apparently physically disabled.

If I am unable to stand, can I offer prayer sitting?

(Response from Sheikh Salih Al-Munajjid)

Standing, bowing and prostrating are pillars or essential parts of the prayer. Whoever can do them, it is obligatory for him to do them in the manner prescribed in sharee'ah. Whoever is not able to do them because of sickness or old age, it is Sunnah for him to sit on the ground or on a chair. ²

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Guard strictly (five obligatory) As-Salawaat (the prayers) especially the middle Salaah (i.e. the best prayer 'Asr). And stand before Allaah with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salaah (prayers)]"

[al-Baqarah 2:238]

It was narrated that 'Imraan ibn Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: I had haemorrhoids so I asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) about praying. He said: "Pray standing up; if you cannot,

² Explaining this, DARUL-IFTAA OF "JAMIAH ISLAAMIYAH MASEEHUL-ULOOM, BANGALORE mentions:

Salaah performed on a chair will be incomplete if a person is capable of sitting on the ground and doing sujood (prostration). This ruling applies to one, even though one may not be capable of standing in Qiyaam.

then pray sitting down; and if you cannot, then pray (lying) on your side.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1066.

Ibn Qudaamah al-Maqdisi said:

The scholars are unanimously agreed that if a person cannot stand then he may pray sitting down. Al-Mughni, 1/443

Al-Nawawi said:

The ummah is unanimously agreed that whoever is unable to stand during the obligatory prayer may pray sitting, and he does not have to repeat it. Our companions said: his reward will not be less than the reward for praying standing, because he is excused. It is proven in Saheeh al-Bukhaari that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “If a person is sick or travelling, the same reward will be written for him with regard to what he used to do when he was not travelling and was healthy.”

Al-Majmoo’, 4/226

Al-Shawkaani said:

The hadeeth of ‘Imraan indicates that it is permissible for one who has an excuse and cannot stand to pray sitting, and for one who has an excuse and cannot pray sitting to pray lying on his side.

Nayl al-Awtaar, 3/243

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said:

The Muslims are agreed that if a worshipper is unable to do some of the obligatory duties of prayer, such as standing, reciting, bowing, prostrating, covering the 'awrah, facing the qiblah etc, then what he is unable to do is waived for him. End quote from Majmoo' al-Fataawa, 8/437

Based on that, if a person offers an obligatory prayer sitting when he is able to stand, his prayer is invalid (However, if a person is waived from this due to a valid reason, then he can offer prayer while sitting).

(Explained by Sheikh Salih Al-Fawzan)

“It is permissible for a Muslim patient to sit in prayer if he cannot stand due to one of the following reasons (or the like):

- If he is unable to stand
- If it is difficult for him to stand
- if he fears to increase the illness or delay his recovery standing up”

“There is no need to re-perform his prayer once he gets well”

(Response by Sheikh Khâlid b. Sa`ûd al-Rashûd)

(This response focusses on those who are unable to stand due to a valid reason)

Scholars agree that keeping the ranks straight is desirable in congregational prayer. Anas relates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Straighten your ranks, for indeed straightening the ranks is part of prayer." [Sahîh al-Bukhârî and Sahîh Muslim]

This straightens of the ranks applies to both the shoulders and the feet. Regarding the shoulders, Ibn Mas'ûd relates: The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to go by and touch us on the shoulders, saying: "Be in line. Do not differ and cause your hearts to differ..." [Sahîh Muslim]

Regarding the feet, al-Nu'mân b. Bashîr relates: The Prophet (peace be upon him) turned to the people and said three times: "Mind your ranks." Then he said: "I swear by Allah, you will mind your ranks or Allah will divide your hearts."

Al-Nu'mân b. Bashîr then gives us an account of how the worshippers responded to this exhortation. He says: "I saw each man place his shoulder against the next man's shoulder and his ankle against his ankle." [Sunan Abî Dâwûd]

Also, Anas b. Mâlik relates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Mind your ranks. I can see you behind my back."

Anas likewise gives us an account of how the worshippers responded to this exhortation. He says: "We used to place our ankles to the ankles of these standing next to us." [Sahîh al-Bukhârî]

However, with respect to elderly and infirm worshippers who pray in a sitting position – whether they are seated in chairs or on the floor – it is not possible for them to line up both their feet and their shoulders. The question, then, is: which criterion must be used to determine their keeping in line with their fellow worshippers?

The answer is that seated worshippers should keep their shoulders in line with the ranks and not worry about their feet. The reasons for this are as follows:

1. When a seated worshipper lines up his feet with the rest of the worshippers in the rank, this places most of his body behind the rank. The body of the seated worshipper is actually situated between two ranks, neither fully in the first nor in the second, and this creates a clear disturbance in the congregation.

2. The practice of the Prophet (peace be upon him) indicates giving priority to the shoulders. As we saw in the hadith narrated by Ibn Mas'ûd, the Prophet used to pass down the line of worshippers and straighten them out by touching them on the shoulders. Also, in his verbal commands, he specifically mentioned the shoulders. This shows that keeping the shoulders in line is the paramount concern when straightening the ranks for prayer.

3. The lower part of the body follows the upper part. In people's everyday dealings – when they line up for any reason and when they meet with each other – they usually focus on the upper body. The lower body follows suit.

In summary, the following general rule can be applied:

Worshippers should line up both their shoulders and feet if they can. If it is impossible to do both, then the shoulders take precedence. If, for some reason, it is altogether impossible for a worshipper to keep his shoulders in line with the other worshippers – as would be the case with a hunchback – then that person should keep his feet in line with the rest of the worshippers. And Allah knows best.

What if I cannot stand but can still do “Rukoo” and “Sujood”?

Most scholars, according to our research, recommend that if a person cannot stand but can do rukoo and sujood, he should do what he can and not do what he can't do.

Same goes for situation when one can stand but can't do rukoo or sujood. Most scholars are found to have opinion that such person should start the prayer standing and when it comes to rukoo and sujood, he can sit. But avoiding standing when one can, is not permissible according to them. However, some scholar (mainly from Hanafi school) are of the opinion that if a person cannot do sujood, then it is permissible for him to sit and pray in that position.

Allah knows best.

(Response by Sheikh Salih Al-Munajjid)

It should be noted that if a person is exempted from standing, his excuse does not make it permissible for him to sit on the chair to bow and prostrate.

If he is exempted from bowing and prostrating in the proper manner, that excuse does not make it permissible for him not to stand and to sit on the chair instead.

The basic principle with regard to the obligatory duties of prayer is that whatever the worshipper can do, he is obliged to do it, and whatever he is unable to do, is waived for him.

Whoever is unable to stand, it is permissible for him to sit on a chair during the standing, and he should bow and prostrate in the proper manner. If he is able to stand but it is difficult for him to bow and prostrate, he should pray standing, then sit on the chair when bowing and prostrating, and he should bend lower for the prostration than for the bowing.

Ibn Qudaamah al-Maqdisi said:

If a person is able to stand but he cannot bow or prostrate, the standing is not waived for him; he should pray standing and tilt his head for the bowing, then sit down and tilt his head for the prostration. This is the view of al-Shaafa'i...

Because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "And stand before Allaah with obedience" [al-Baqarah 2:238], and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Pray standing." And because standing is one of the pillars (essential parts of prayer) for the one who is able to do it, so he must do it, like the recitation. Being unable to do other things does not mean that this is waived, as is also the case if he is unable to recite. End quote from al-Mughni, 1/44.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

The one who prays sitting on the ground or on a chair must make his prostration lower than his bowing. The Sunnah is for him to put his hands on his knees when bowing, and when prostrating the Sunnah is to put them on the ground if possible; if he cannot do that then he should put them on his knees, because it was proven that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "I have been commanded to prostrate on seven bones: the forehead – and he pointed to his nose – the two hands, the two knees, and the edges of the two feet (i.e., the toes)."

If a person is unable to do that and prays on a chair, there is nothing wrong with that, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"So keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him as much as you can"

[al-Taghaabaun 64:16]

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "If I tell you to do a thing, then do as much of it as you can." Saheeh – agreed upon.

Fataawa Ibn Baaz, 12/245, 246.

(Responded by Sheikh Salih Al-Fawzan)

If he is able to stand and sit, but cannot bow or prostrate, then he motions with his head for the bowing

while he stands, and he motions with his head for the prostration while he sits.

If he is able to sit, but cannot stand, then he performs the initial takbeerah, the recitation of Al-Faatihah and what is easy of the Quran to recite [while sitting]. He motions with his head for the rukoo' (bowing) while he sits. He prostrates on the ground if his able. If not, then he motions with his head for the prostration while sitting, making his nodding [or bending over] lower for prostration than for bowing.

When praying seated, it is better and more complete to sit on the floor if one is able. If not, then he may sit in a chair, and he does everything a person would do sitting on the floor.

(Response from Dar ul Fiqh – Mufti Faraz Adam al-Mahmudi / Mufti Ebrahim Desai)

A person who is able to stand (make Qiyām) but cannot make Sajdah has the following options:

- 1) She may perform the entire Salāh including the gestures for Rukū' and Sajdah standing up
- 2) She may perform the Qiyām and Rukū' standing up and then sit down to perform the gesture for Sajdah
- 3) She may perform the entire Salāh including the gestures for Rukū' and Sajdah sitting down.

From the three options mentioned above, the Jurists have stated that the last option (to perform the entire Salāh in a sitting posture and gesture) is best

في الشامي: وفي الذخيرة : رجل بحلقه خراج إن سجد سال وهو قادر على الركوع والقيام والقراءة يصلي قاعدا يومئ ؛ ولو صلى قائما بركوع وقعد وأوما بالسجود أجزأه ، والأول أفضل لأن القيام والركوع لم يشرعا قرابة بنفسهما ، بل ليكونا وسيلتين إلى السجود

(Response by Allama Zameer Ahmed Mutazai)

(Response from Dar ul Ifta, Deoband)

(Sheikh Tabrez Alim; Fatwa approved by sheikh faraz rabbani)

“If a person is capable of doing sujood, it is obligatory upon him to do qiyam as much as he can as long as he does not have a valid reason which waives it, even if it amounts to only takbir tahreema and even if he has to take a support to stand.

However, if a person is not capable of doing sujuud, it is not obligatory on him to do qiyam, even if he doesn't have a valid reason for not standing. Infact, it is preferred to sit.³

Allama Zameer Ahmed Murtazai adds:

Opinion that a person should stand in qiyam even if he is not capable of doing sujood is the opinion from shafi'is.”

“If a person is capable of making sujood on an object 9 inches high from ground, he would also be considered as

³ This is also the opinion of other hanafi scholars and is mentioned in research work by Mufti Ghulam Muhammad Bandyalvi, Allama Muhammad Ali Kareemi and others

one being able to do sujood and he will also need to do qiyam unless he has got an excuse which can waive it.”

In ahadith, it is narrated about companions such as Umm e Salma, Anas and Abul Aalia (May Allah be pleased with them all) to do sujood on objects of some height.

I don't have a valid excuse to offer prayer while sitting. Can I still offer voluntary salah (nafil) while sitting?

(Responded by Group of Muftis on onislam.net)

In performing supererogatory prayers, sitting is permitted, though it earns one half of the reward of performing prayer in standing. The evidence that this rule applies only to the obligatory prayers is the hadith in which the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Pray while standing." (Reported by Al-Bukhari)

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to pray supererogatory prayers (sitting) on a saddle, but on getting to pray an obligatory prayer, he would get down off his saddle so that he could fulfill the essential conditions of the prayer, i.e., standing and facing the qiblah. (Reported by Al Bukhari and Muslim)

If a person prays supererogatory prayer sitting, when he is able to stand, he will have half of the reward of one who stands. 'Abdullah Ibn 'Umar narrated that he said to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) "I was told, O Messenger of Allah, that you said that the prayer of one who prays while sitting down is half of the

prayer performed by one standing, but you pray sitting down.” He said, “That is right, but I am not like anyone of you.” (Reported by Muslim)

In his commentary on the aforementioned hadith, Imam An-Nawawi said: “This hadith is to be understood as meaning that supererogatory prayer done sitting down when one is able to stand will bring half of the reward of one who prays standing. But if a person prays a supererogatory prayer sitting down because he is unable to stand, his reward will not be reduced, and he will have the same reward as one who prays standing. With regard to obligatory prayers, if a person prays sitting down when he is able to stand, his prayer will not be valid and he will not get any reward for this is actually counted as a sin.”

So we say to those who perform prayers while sitting on the chairs during the obligatory prayers that it is not permissible for them to sit on chairs when they are able to stand, unless they find it extremely difficult to stand; but a slight difficulty is not an excuse.”

(Responded by Darul-Iftaa of “Jamiah Islaamiyah Maseehul-Uloom, Bangalore)

Although Qiyaam (standing) is not a Rukn (Integral part) in Nafl Salaah (optional prayers), it must be borne in mind that the Sujood(prostration) still remains a Rukn!. Hence, Nafl Salaah will be regarded incomplete on a chair with gestures, if a person is capable of sitting down to do sujood on the ground. (Al Fataawa Al Hindiyaah 490/3)

Where should I place my chair in row (saff) while praying?

(Response by Sheikh Salih Al-Munajjid)

With regard to the placement of the chair in the row, the scholars (may Allaah have mercy on them) stated that the one who prays sitting down should have his posterior in line with the row when he is sitting, so he should not be in front of the row or behind it at that point, because that is the place in which the body settles.

See Asnaa al-Mataalib, 1/222; Tuhfat al-Muhtaaaj, 2/157; Sharh Muntaha al-Iraadaat, 1/279.

It says in al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah (6/21):

In order for a person's following the imam to be valid, he should not stand in front of the imam according to the majority of fuqaha' (Hanafis, Shaafaa'is and Hanbalis).

How do we know whether he is in front of the imam or not, it is judged by where the heels are. If they are standing level at the heel and the toes of the one who is praying behind the imam turn out to be in front because he has longer feet, that does not matter. With regard to those who are sitting, it is judged by where the posterior

is. And with regard to those who are praying on their sides, it is judged by their sides.

If the worshipper is going to pray on the chair from the beginning of the prayer until the end, then he should make the place where he will sit level with the row.

If he is going to pray standing, but he will sit on the chair when he bows and prostrates, we asked Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmaan al-Barraak about that, and he said that what matters here is the standing position, so he should be level with the row when standing.

Based on this, the chair will be behind the row, so it should be placed in such a manner that it will not disturb worshippers in the row behind.

And Allaah knows best.

(Responded by Sheikh Salih Al-Fawzan)

The chair is to be lined up along with the row, and it should be a small chair whenever possible, so it does not take a large amount of space and encroach upon the space of those next to, behind, and in front of him.

He does not pray directly behind the imaam, to leave that place for healthy people who could take his place when needed, or prompt him when he cannot remember something in his recitation.

(Responded by Centre of Fatawa on Islamweb.net)

"We did not find that the one who is praying while sitting on a chair should have a certain place in the row. Consequently, he has the right to pray wherever he wants but he should pay attention to harmony with the row. In addition, he should take care that his existence in the row does not cause a gap in or an irregularity in the row."

(Responded by Islamic Council for Fatawa in Jerusalem)

"If he is praying in congregation, he should pray at the left side of the back rows and he should not break rows especially the first one."

What sort of chair should I use?

(Explained by Mohamed Ragab Abdel-Mon'im, Read to approved by Sheikh Abdurrahman Abdul-Khalig)

It is to be noted that the one who prays on a chair should not choose a full-size chair. He should choose a chair that does not occupy a large space in the mosque. The chair should not be bigger than his body, or take a space larger than the space his body takes.

What if I start the prayer standing but cannot continue to stand for the whole time?

(Responded by Darul-Iftaa of “Jamiah Islaamiyah Maseehul-Uloom, Bangalore)

If a person is capable of standing, although it may not be throughout the entire Salaah, it is Fardh for him to stand for as long as possible. If such a person sits down for even the short period in which it is possible to stand, the Salaah will be incomplete!

وان قدر على بعض القيام لزوما بقدر ما يقدر، ولو قدر آية أو تكبيرة لأن البعض معتبر بالكل

(در المختار مع الشامى 97/2)

“If one is capable of standing for a short while, it is necessary to do so in accordance to the duration of one’s ability even though it may be for the duration of (listening) to one verse or a takbeer (saying Allahu Akbar), for indeed the partial is considered for the overall”. (Dur Al Mukhtaar with Shaami)

I cannot stand by myself, but I can stand in prayer with the help of a support? Should I still stand?

(Responded by Darul-Iftaa of "Jamiah Islaamiyah Maseehul-Uloom, Bangalore)

If a person is able to stand, while gaining support from an object or leaning upon something, the Salaah will be rendered incomplete, if performed in a seated position.

ولو قدر على القيام متكئا ، الصحيح أنه يصلى قائما متكئا ولا يجزيه غير ذلك
وكذلك لو قدر على ان يعتمد على عصا أو على خادم له فانه يقوم و يتكئ

(الشامى 97/2)

“If one has the ability to stand while leaning, the correct view is that one should offer the prayer while in a standing position reclining on something. It would not be correct to do other than that. Similarly, if one has the strength to lean on a staff or an attendant, he is to stand and lean (for prayers)” (Shaami)

What is the “difficulty” which makes it permissible to pray sitting down?

(Response by Sheikh Salih Al-Munajjid)

The guidelines for the excuse which allows one not to stand and to offer obligatory prayers sitting down, are as follows:

- 1- That he be unable to stand
- 2- That it will make his sickness worse
- 3- That it will delay his recovery
- 4- That it should cause great difficulty of such a scale that he will be unable to focus properly. If the difficulty caused is less than that, then it is not permissible for him to sit.

Al-Bukhaari (1117) narrated that ‘Imraan ibn Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: I had haemorrhoids and I asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) about praying. He said: “Pray standing, and if you cannot then sitting, and if you cannot, then lying on your side.”

Al-Haafiz said: The words “If you cannot” were quoted as evidence by those who say that a sick person should not

start to sit whilst praying until after he becomes unable to stand. This was narrated by 'Iyaad from al-Shaafa'i. It was narrated from Maalik, Ahmad and Ishaq that it is not essential that a person be unable to stand, rather if it is very difficult for him to stand (then he may sit).

The well-known view among the Shaafa'is is that what is meant by not being able is that it is very difficult to stand, or there is the fear that the sickness may be made worse or it may lead to the death of the patient. Slight difficulty is not sufficient (as an excuse). Another example of great hardship is dizziness in the case of a passenger on a boat who fears that he may drown if he prays standing in the boat.

The majority also quote as evidence the hadeeth of Ibn 'Abbaas which was narrated by al-Tabaraani: "He should pray standing, but if he encounters difficulty then sitting, and if he encounters difficulty, then lying down."

End quote from Fath al-Baari.

The hadeeth of Ibn 'Abbaas which was mentioned by al-Haafiz was also quoted by al-Haythami in Majma' al-Zawaa'id, 2897, where he says:

This was narrated by al-Tabaraani in al-Awsat. He said: It was not narrated from Ibn Jurayj except by Halas ibn Muhammad al-Dab'i. I (al-Haythami) say: I cannot find anyone who wrote his biography, but the rest of the men (in its isnaad) are thiqaat (trustworthy). End quote.

Ibn Qudaamah said in al-Mughni, 1/443:

If he is able to stand (he should do so), otherwise if he fears that his sickness will become worse or his recovery will be slowed or it is extremely difficult for him to stand, then he may pray sitting down. Something similar was said by Maalik and Ishaq... because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“and has not laid upon you in religion any hardship”

[al-Hajj 22:78]

The obligation of standing in this case is a hardship.

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) prayed sitting down when he was wounded in his right cheek; it seems that he was not completely unable to stand, but because it was difficult for him to stand, he was excused. End quote.

Our companions said: Being unable does not necessarily mean that one cannot stand and slight difficulty is not enough reason for not standing; rather what counts is obvious difficulty. If a person fears immense hardship or worsening of the sickness etc, or if a passenger in a boat fears that he may drown or become dizzy, he may pray sitting down, and he does not have to repeat the prayer. Imam al-Haramayn said: What I think with regard to the guidelines on what constitutes an inability to stand is that standing would cause hardship that would prevent him from focusing properly, because proper focus is the purpose of prayer. End quote.

The view favoured by Imam al-Haramayn is the view which Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen thought most likely to be correct. He said:

The guideline on what constitutes hardship is that which prevents one from focusing properly. Proper focus means having presence of mind and being at ease. If standing will cause intense anxiety which makes one ill at ease and makes him wish to reach the end of al-Faatihah quickly so that he can bow, because it is too hard to stand, then he may pray sitting down. End quote from al-Sharh al-Mumtī’, 4/326.

(Responded by Darul-Iftaa of “Jamiah Islaamiyah Maseehul-Uloom, Bangalore)

A person will only be considered “excused” or “exempt” (from standing) who is unable to stand at all under any circumstances. If he were to stand, he would fall down, become sick or the illness would increase and prolong. An experienced, righteous Muslim doctor’s advice would be required to confirm this condition. Islamically, all other pretexts would not be taken into consideration for being exempt from the mandatory standing during prayer.

اراد بالتعذر الحقيقى بحيث لو قام سقط ، أو حكمى بان خاف زيادته أو بطئ برئه بقيامه ، أو دوران رأسه ، أو وجد لقيامه ألما شديدا ، صلى قاعدا (الدرالمختار مع الشامى 96/2)

“The physical sense of the exemption (from standing) is the condition where if one is to stand, they would definitely fall. The elusive sense of the exemption would

be in the condition where the standing would result in fear of worsening of the health condition, delay in gaining cure for one's ailment, dizziness of the head, or experiencing unbearable pain by standing. It is only in these conditions one may perform the prayers, while seated". (Dur Al Mukhtaar with Shaami)

I have a valid excuse for not being able to stand in prayer. Shall I sit on chair or on ground?

(Responded by Darul-Iftaa of "Jamiah Islaamiyah Maseehul-Uloom, Bangalore)

If a person is able to sit on the ground and perform Salaah, though the person may be incapable of doing sujood (prostration on the ground), the person should perform Salaah seated on the ground while gesturing for sujood (prostration). In this condition, it is preferred for a person to sit on the ground and offer the prayer rather than on a chair. It is also preferred for a person sitting and praying to sit in the position of Tashahhud (seated posture in prayer while reciting Al Tahiyatu). if this is not possible, then any other position comfortable for the worshiper may be adopted.

ينبغي ان يقال: ان كان جلوسه كما يجلس للتشهد ايسر عليه من غيره أو مساويا لغيره كان أولى ، والا اختار الايسر في جميع الحالات

(در المختار 97/2)

“The seating posture of Tashahhud, if possible, is superior to any other posture. If sitting in the Tashahhud posture is not possible, the worshiper is to opt for any suitable position in all circumstances”. (Dur Al Mukhtaar)

(Responded by Dr. Ahmad Dhiâb Shuwaydah)

Al-Bukhâri reported the Hadith by 'Imrân ibn Hussayn when he suffered from hemorrhoids (previously mentioned). Therefore, if the one who is sitting on a chair is able to stand up without a considerable difficulty, his prayer is not correct because it lacks a pillar. He should try to stand up even if during reciting Surat Al-Fâtihah. Whoever is able to pray on the ground, it is better to pray on it [instead of the chair]. This is because praying on a chair causes him to miss prostration though he is capable of doing it; so, his prayer will not be correct. If someone cannot kneel down such as the one who has foot injury and who prays sitting on the ground or on a chair, he is not permitted to abandon prostration while he has strength to do it. This is because every pillar has its own cases and rulings and the patient may be able to stand up but cannot kneel down and he may be able to kneel down but he cannot prostrate. In addition, he may not be able to kneel down but he can prostrate.

Therefore, he must perform the pillars that he has enough strength to do, or his prayer will not be correct because it lacks one of its pillars.

(Responded by the Islamic Council for Fatwa in Jerusalem)

According to the Islamic Council for Fatwa in Jerusalem, "It was not reported that the Messenger of

Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, prayed on a chair, a bench, or a bed during his illness.⁴

This is although all these things existed at the time of the Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him. The Muslim should not allow bashfulness or arrogance to prevent him from praying on the ground [while he is able to do this]. If he prayed on a chair at this case, his prayer would be null."

(Responded by The Center of Fatawa, islamweb.net)

"Standing in the obligatory prayer is one of its pillars without which the prayer is incomplete. The one who is praying should not sit except after failing to stand. It is reported in the authentic book of Al-Bukhâri that 'Imrân ibn Hussayn, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "I suffered from hemorrhoids and I asked the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, [about prayers] upon which he said, "Pray while standing, and if you cannot, pray while sitting, and if you cannot do even that, then pray lying on your side." [Reported by Al-Bukhâri 1117]

Thus, if it is confirmed that he is unable to stand, he is permitted to pray while sitting but this does not justify abandoning prostration. This is because prostration is one

⁴ 'Aisha narrated that during his illness before death, the Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has said, "Tell Abu Bakr to lead the people in prayer," and the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, prayed while sitting behind him. [Reported by Al-Bukhâri 713] Anas ibn Mâlik said, "The last prayer which the Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, performed was while he was enveloped in garment and he prayed it while sitting." [Musnad Imam Ahmad]

of the pillars of prayer without which the prayer is not correct. Consequently, his prayer on a chair is incorrect if he abandoned prostration.

(Explained by Imam Nawawi, Narrated in English by Mohamed Ragab Abdel-Mon'im; Read to and approved by Sheikh Abdurrahman Abdul-Khaliq)

We should know that there are two detailed conditions for the one who prays while sitting, which are mentioned in details by Imam An-Nawawi in his book "Al-Majmû". He said, "The sitting which is an alternative of standing is performed best by one of two ways. The more superior method is to sit in the Iftirâsh position (placing the left foot on its side and sitting on it; and keeping the right foot vertical while resting on the bottom of the toes turning them towards the Qibla.) this is the narration of Al-Muznî, Abû Hanîfa, Zufar and others.

The second method is to sit squaring his legs. This is according to the narration of Al-Buwaytî, Imam Mâlik, Ath-Thawrî, Al-Layth, Imam Ahmad, Ishâq, Abû Yûsuf, Mohammad, and others. The author of the book [An-Nawawî] mentioned the proofs of these methods. One of the methods is to sit in the Tawarruk position (sitting with the left posterior on the ground while the right foot placed vertically with toes pointing towards the Qibla; and the left foot on its side emerging from under the right foot.) The imam of the two Holy Mosques, Al-Ghazâlî, and others reported this method because this method is easier for the one who is praying. In the second method, he sits while the right foot is placed vertically and the left foot is

under him. This is well known for the people of Khorasan and the Judge Hussein chose it because it is the highest rank of decorum."

(Responded by Dar ul Ifta Deoband)

If a person is not capable to do qiyam but can do sujood on ground, he is required to sit on ground and offer prayer while doing sujood on ground. in this case, it will not be permissible to pray on chair or to do sujood with gestures. if a person is not capable to do rukoo and sujood and can offer prayer with gestures while sitting on ground, it is not required to sit only in the posture for tashahud. a person can take any suitable posture. in this situation as well, it is advised that chairs should not be used. praying while sitting on ground is a masnoon way of offering prayer (if one is waived from qiyam) and this has been the practice of sahaba r.a. however, if there is no way a person can sit on ground and offer prayer, it is permissible to sit on chairs.

If I am praying while sitting, where should I put my hands while doing 'Rukoo' and 'Sujood'

(Responded by Sheikh 'Abdul-'Azîz ibn Bâz)

"The one who observed prayer while sitting on the ground or on a chair should make his prostration nearer to the ground than his kneeling.

It is a Sunnah to put his hand on his knees during kneeling down. However, during prostrating he should make them on the ground as possible as he can. Nevertheless, if he is not able to put them on the ground, he is allowed to put them on his knees. It has been affirmed that the Prophet, prayers (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), has said, "I have been commanded to prostrate myself on seven bones. [They are] the forehead, - and then he pointed with his hand towards his nose-, hands, feet, and the extremities of the feet; and we were forbidden to fold back clothing and hair." [Reported by Al-Bukhâri and Muslim] Whoever failed to do this and he performed prayers while sitting on a chair, there is no blame upon him for doing this. Allah Glorified and Exalted says, {So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can} [Surat At-Taghâbun: 16] The Prophet,

prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has also said, "And if I order you to do something, then do of it as much as you can." [Reported by Al-Bukhâri 7228]

(Responded by Ifta Team on Islamweb.net)

"If the one who observes prayer on a chair does not kneel down or prostrate though he is able to do them, his prayer is void because he has left one of the pillars of prayer."

(Responded by Darul-Iftaa of "Jamiah Islaamiyah Maseehul-Uloom, Bangalore)

It has been commonly noticed that those performing Salaah on chairs extend the hands forward while doing Rukuu and Sujood, this is incorrect. The hands must remain on the thighs while gesturing with the head only.

(Responded by the Islamic Council for Fatwa in Jerusalem)

"If he is able to start the prayer standing, he is obliged to stand up and if he is able to kneel down, he should perform it while standing then he sits on the chair to prostrate. If he could not do this, he is allowed to sit during kneeling down and prostrating and he should make his prostration lower than his kneeling down. If he fails to stand up or to sit on the ground, he sits on a chair and bends his head for kneeling down and if he can prostrate, he should do it. If he cannot prostrate, he is allowed to bend his head. If he is able to sit on the ground but he prayed on a chair, his prayer is not correct because he violated the Hadith and actions of the Messenger of

Allah (prayers and peace of Allah be upon him) as he, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, prayed while sitting on the ground.

(Response by Allama Zameer Ahmed Mutazai)

A person who is not capable to do sujood on ground or a higher object placed on ground, he can offer prayer on chair with board installed for sujood. However, one should bent less for rukoo and more for sujood.

In doing so, an object on which sujood is to be done cannot be lifted towards face. Once, Abdullah bin Masud (R.A.) went to see his brother who was unwell. A piece of wood was being lifted for him to make sujood on that. He forbade that. It is also narrated from Rasool Allah (May Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his mention be exalted) advised to a patient to either do sujood on ground or do it through gestures. He also advised bending down more in sujood than in rukoo (Sunan Al Kubra Al-Baihaqi).

I do not have a mosque at my place of work. I pray in my sitting on driving seat. Is my prayer valid?

(Response by Sheikh Salih Al-Munajjid)

Standing during an obligatory prayer is one of the pillars or essential parts of the prayer, and it not permissible to omit it unless one is unable to stand because of sickness or intense fear, and the like. If a person omits it deliberately then his prayer is invalid. Hence it is clear to you that what you are doing by performing your prayers whilst sitting down is not permissible because you have no shar'i excuse, and your prayer sitting down is regarded as invalid. The evidence for that is the reports narrated by al-Bukhaari (1117) and others, from 'Imraan ibn Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: "I had haemorrhoids and I asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) about prayer. He said: 'Pray standing up. If you cannot, then pray sitting down, and if you cannot, then on your side.'" See al-Sharh al-Mumtī', 3/401. (For more details on the rulings on standing in prayer, see Question # 13340).

Once this is clear to you, then you should note that it is also not permissible for you to delay prayers until after the

time for them has passed. Rather you must perform each prayer at the time that is set for it in sharee'ah. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, As-Salaah (the prayer) is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours” [al-Nisa’ 4:103]

So you must strive to perform the prayers on time, standing up, in any suitable place, on the condition that the place be taahir (pure, clean). This is one of the things that sharee'ah makes easy, because Allaah has given the ummah of Muhammad the unique privilege of permitting prayer in any clean place, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “I have been given five things that were not given to anyone before me: I have been supported by fear (struck into the hearts of my enemies) for the distance of a month’s travel; the earth has been made a place of prayer and a means of purification for me, so that whenever the time for prayer comes, any man of my ummah can pray wherever he is; war-booty has been made permissible for me, when it was not permitted to anyone before me; I have been given the power of intercession; and Prophets (before me) were sent only to their own people, but I have been sent to all of mankind.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 335, and others).

If there is no mosque nearby where you can pray in congregation, then it is permissible for you to pray in any clean place, apart from a few places where Islam forbids praying, such as graveyards and land that has been seized unjustly by force. And Allaah knows best.

Would my prayer be acceptable if I pray behind an Imam sitting on chair? Is it permissible for Imam to lead prayer like this?

There are various views about this. We have quoted responses from various scholars to enable comparative analysis.

(Responded by Ibn Uthaymeen)

"There is no proof that the one who is standing should not pray behind the one who is unable to stand up."⁵

(Responded by Ibn Uthaymeen)

It is permissible for him to lead the people in prayer whilst sitting down. This is the view of Abu Haneefah, al-Shaafa'i and Ahmad.

How the worshippers behind him should pray depends on the situation:

1 – If the imam starts praying sitting down, then the people behind him should pray sitting down.

⁵ Hadith No. 689 of book 11 of Sahih Bukhari mentions permissibility of praying behind a sitting Imam.

The evidence for this is as follows:

(i) It was narrated that 'Aa'ishah the Mother of the Believers said: "The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) prayed at home when he was sick. He prayed sitting down and some people prayed behind him standing up, but he gestured to them that they should sit. When he finished (the prayer) he said, 'The imam has been appointed to be followed. When he bows, bow; when he raises his head, raise your heads; and if he prays sitting, then pray sitting.'" (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, al-Adhaan, 657)

(ii) It was narrated from Anas ibn Maalik that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) rode a horse and fell, and the right side (of his body) was injured. He offered one of the prayers sitting down, and we prayed behind him sitting down. When he finished (the prayer) he said, 'The imam has been appointed to be followed. If he prays standing up, then pray standing up; when he bows, bow; when he raises his head, raise your heads. When he says Sami' Allaahu liman hamidah (Allaah hears the one who praises Him), say Rabbanaa wa laka'l-hamd (Our Lord, to You be praise). If he prays standing, then pray standing, and if he prays sitting, then pray sitting, all of you.'" (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, al-Adhaan, 648).

2 - If the imam starts the prayer standing, then something happens to him that makes him unable to stand any more, those who are praying behind him should complete the prayer standing.

The evidence for this is as follows:

(i) It was narrated that ‘Aa’ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) became seriously ill and asked, ‘Have the people prayed?’ We replied, ‘No, they are waiting for you.’ He said, ‘Put some water in a tub for me.’ We did that and he took a bath and tried to get up, but he fainted. Then he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) recovered, and again asked, ‘Have the people prayed?’ We said, ‘No, they are waiting for you, O Messenger of Allaah.’ He again said, ‘Put some water in a tub for me.’ He sat down and took a bath and tried to get up but fainted again. Then he recovered and said, ‘Have the people prayed?’ We said, ‘No, they are waiting for you, O Messenger of Allaah.’ He again said, ‘Put some water in a tub for me.’ He sat down and took a bath and tried to get up but fainted again. Then he recovered and said, ‘Have the people prayed?’ We said, ‘No, they are waiting for you, O Messenger of Allaah.’ The people were in the mosque, waiting for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to lead them in ‘Isha prayer. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) sent word to Abu Bakr that he should lead the people in prayer. The messenger went to him and said, ‘The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is telling you to lead the people in prayer.’ Abu Bakr, who was a soft-hearted man, said: ‘O ‘Umar, lead the people in prayer.’ But ‘Umar answered, you have more right to do that.’ So Abu Bakr led the prayers during those days. Then when the Prophet (peace and blessings of

Allaah be upon him) felt a little better, he came out supported by two men, one of whom was al-'Abbaas, for the Zuhr prayer. Abu Bakr was leading the people in prayer, but when Abu Bakr saw him, he wanted to step back [to let the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) lead the prayer]. But the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) gestured to him that he should not step back. He said, 'Sit me down beside him,' so they sat him down beside Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr continued praying, but he followed the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in prayer, and the people were following Abu Bakr in the prayer, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was sitting down." (narrated by al-Bukhaari, al-Adhaan, 655).

The relevant point in this hadeeth is that Abu Bakr started to lead them in prayer standing up, then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came and led them from where Abu Bakr had reached, and he prayed sitting down, and the Sahaabah prayed behind him standing up. This indicates that if the imam starts the prayer standing, then he becomes unable to carry on standing, then the people praying behind him should still pray standing.

This does not mean that the prayer is lacking and it does not detract from its blessing, in sha Allaah. And Allaah knows best.

See Ahkaam al-Imamah wa'l-I'timaam fi'l-Salaah by al-Muneef, p. 112-116; Fath al-Baari Sharh Saheeh al-Bukhaari by Ibn Hajar, vol. 2, p. 174.

(Responded by Sheikh `Atiyya Saqr, former head of Al-Azhar Fatwa Committee)

“Muslim scholars found their judgment on the following two hadiths:

1-Both Al-Bukhari and Muslim quoted `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) as saying that when the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was once complaining from an injury, and the Companions were with him, paying him a visit, the time for Prayer became due. So he led them in prayer while sitting but the people praying behind him were standing.

Upon finishing the prayer, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) told them that people praying behind Imam should stick to his posture while praying, if he prays in sitting they should sit, and vice versa. In explaining the reason behind this, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said that people praying in standing while Imam is sitting resembles the blameworthy practice of Persians towards their kings, who would always sit down receiving people who'd stand for him in respect. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in fact forbade standing for one in respect while that person remains sitting.

2-The second hadith is the one narrated also by Bukhari and Muslim in which they quote `A'ishah as stating that when the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was once sick and he went out to pray, people made him sit besides Abu Bakr who performed the prayer standing

besides him and being led by the Prophet while people were following him (Abu Bakr).

In the light of these two hadiths, opinions differ, some scholars say that it's permissible for people to be led by Imam who finds it difficult to perform the prayer in standing. So this means that the people can pray behind such Imam in standing while he sits down. They base this opinion on the second hadith.

However, some other scholars maintain that such thing is not permissible. When an Imam finds it difficult to perform prayer in standing, the people should pray behind him while sitting. They base this opinion on the first hadith.

There is another third opinion saying that this issue depends on what does Imam starts with. If he starts prayer sitting down, the people should sit behind him, if he starts it standing up, they should do the same, no matter any changes that happen to Imam afterwards.

It appears that this issue is really controversial, and Muslim scholars have said a lot on it. For more information, check books of Islamic jurisprudence, ("Nayl Al-Awtar" by Shawkani, Volume 3, Page 180, "Al-Mughni" by Ibn Qudama, Vol 2 Page 47).

As regards the opinions of the four Islamic juristic schools, the Malikis maintain that it's not permissible for a person to perform prayer behind someone who finds it difficult to pray in standing, even if that prayer happens to be supererogatory.

The Hanafis state that it's permissible for people to pray behind an Imam who cannot stand for prayer as long as he's able to bow and prostrate, otherwise, praying behind him is not permissible.

As for Shafi`is, they say that such prayer is permissible even if only what Imam can do is to pray by nodding. The Hanbalis maintain that it's not permissible for a person to perform prayer behind an Imam who cannot stand up unless he happens to be a regular Imam of the mosque, and his inability is something temporary.

So far this issue is very controversial; one is allowed to follow any opinion without showing bias against others."

(Responded by Darul Ifta Birmingham)

It is permissible to follow an Imam who is sitting down and performing the ruku and sajdah on the ground. However, if the Imam say for example is sitting on a chair and is gesturing the ruku or sajdah, then it will not be permissible to follow him. (Fatawa Hindiyyah p.85 v.1)

Keeping the aforementioned information in mind we can derive that following the Imam in the first situation will be permissible.

Regarding the second situation, if the Imam is sitting and performing the ruku and sajdah on the ground, taraweeh behind him will be correct. However, if he is gesturing the ruku and sajdah from a sitting position, taraweeh behind him will not be correct.

Only Allah Knows Best.

Should I leave some gap from the first few rows if I am offering prayer while sitting on chair?

(Explained by Mohamed Ragab Abdel-Mon'im, Read to approved by Sheikh Abdurrahman Abdul-Khaliq)

The proofs, which urge Muslims to pray in the first row, did not differentiate between the standing and the sitting ones. This is because all Muslims are commanded to compete to pray in the first row and no one has the right to prevent anyone who wants to do good from doing it. However, if the one who is praying on a chair will make a gap or irregularity in the row, avoiding this will be better. Thus, he can pray on the right or the left sides of the row so that he does not cause a gap in the praying row.

In the Hadiths mentioned about straightening the rows, aligning, and regulating them, there is no difference between the standing and the sitting ones. Scholars determined the place where the one who is sitting on a chair can pray (as mentioned before). The following are some of the Hadiths concerning straightening the rows:

An-Nu'mân ibn Bashîr narrated that the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has said, "You

must straighten your rows or Allah will certainly put your faces in opposite directions [create dissention among you]." [Reported by Al-Bukhâri 717 and Muslim 436]

Anas ibn Mâlik, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that when he arrived at Medina, he was asked, "Have you found any changes since the days of the Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, (which you do not agree to)? He said, "I have not found any change except that you do not stand in straight alignment in your prayers."

Anas has narrated that the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has said, "Straighten your rows as the straightening of rows is essential for a perfect and correct prayer." [Reported by Al-Bukhâri 723]

He, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has said, "Straighten your rows for I see you from behind my back." [Reported by Al-Bukhâri 719] Anas [the narrator of this Hadith] added, "Every one of us used to put his shoulder with the shoulder of his companion and his foot with the foot of his companion."

Anas has also narrated that the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has said, "Straighten your rows, bring them near one another, and stand neck to neck." [Reported by An-Nasâ'I 814 and classified as authentic by Al-Albâni]

As-Sindi, may Allah have mercy on him, said, "Straighten your rows" by standing close together in your rows. "Bring them near one another" means reducing the

space between every two rows so that rows are near one another.

Al-Manâwi, may Allah have mercy on him, said, "Bring them near one another" means do not leave a space of a row between every two rows so that Satan cannot pass between your rows."

Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has said, "Complete the front row, then the one that comes next..." [Reported by An-Nasâ'i 817 and classified as authentic by Al-Albâni]

Sheikh ibn 'Uthaymîn , may Allah have mercy on him, was asked, "What is the ruling of the prayer which we perform in the yard of the mosque? Taking into consideration that the yard is affiliated to the mosque?"

He answered, "If all the ones who are praying gathered at the yard of the mosque, there is no blame in that and it is permissible. On the other hand, if the ones observing prayer are inside the building and the others are outside, they will be violating the Sunnah. This is because the Sunnah is to bring rows near one another and to pray at the same place where the imam prays. However, their prayer is correct by every means. (Fatwas of "A Light on the Way")

Sheikh ibn 'Uthaymîn, may Allah have mercy on him, has also said, "Straightening the rows includes bringing the rows near the imam because they are in congregation. In Arabic, the word congregation (jamâ'ah) is derived

from the word gathering (ijtimâ') and there is no complete gathering if the members are far from one another. Whenever rows are brought nearer to one another and to the imam, this will be better and more praise-worthy. In some mosques, we see that the space between the imam and the first row is too large that it can include one or two rows. This act is caused by ignorance, as the Sunnah for the imam is to be near the ones praying behind him and vice versa. In addition, it is a Sunnah that every row becomes near to the other one. (The scale of nearness is to have a space, which allows kneeling down and prostrating with a small extra space) (The enjoyable Explanation)

The center of Fatwa (in islamweb.net), mentioned, "Straightening the rows is established by getting shoulders close to shoulders (as if glued) and heels close to heels (as if glued). Al-Bukhâri included in

his Authentic Book, "The chapter of attaching the shoulder to the neighboring shoulder and the foot to the foot in the row (of prayer). An-Nu'mân ibn Bashîr said, "I saw the man of us attaching his heel to the heel of his companion (in prayer)." Al-Hâfidh ibn Hajar said in his book "Al-Fath", "The Hadith of An-Nu'mân ibn Bashîr proved that what is meant by the heel in the verse of ablution is the emerging bone on both sides of the foot. It is in the junction of the leg and the foot and this is what can be attached to the one neighboring him. This opinion is contradicting the view stating that the heel means the back of the foot; however, this is an odd view of the Hanafis. Such view is not proved by their scholars and

some of them proved it in the issue of pilgrimage not ablution."

The center of Fatwa (in islamweb.net), mentioned, "The place for the one who prays while sitting is broad as he can pray directly behind the imam, at the end of the row or at any side of it. This matter is unlimited, as the person who prays on a chair far from the rows should exert his utmost in order to be connected with the row. He should avoid praying away because this breaks the rows. The Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has said, "Whoever joins up a row, he will be joined to Allah (i.e., to the Mercy of Allah); and whoever cuts off a row, he will be cut off from Allah (i.e., from His Mercy)." [Reported by Abu Dâwûd 666 and An-Nasâ'i 818. It is classified as authentic by Al-Albâni]

Consequently, as the place for the one who prays while sitting is broad and there is no evidence or text defining a place for him, he has the right to sit anywhere at the middle or the ends of the row. In addition, putting chairs at the back part of the mosque and leaving spaces between the rows are considered two violations of the Hadiths of the Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, and the fatwa of scholars. This is because this causes the rows to be broken, unaligned, and fail to be straightened.

Therefore, it is better to pray within rows except if they fear harming the ones who are praying. At that case, the ends of the rows will be better and Allah knows best.

Prayers and peace of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, and upon all his family and companions

Can we pray salat while in a moving car that's because there is no place to stop and pray?

(Response by Sheikh Salih Al-Munajjid)

Performing prayers at the right time is a trust and an obligation, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Verily, al-Salaat (the prayer) is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours." [al-Nisaa' 4:103].

Delaying the prayer past its appointed time is a grave major sin, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"So woe unto those performers of salaah (prayers) (hypocrites), who delay their salaah from their stated fixed times." [al-Maa'oon 107:4-5]

Some scholars state that the person who deliberately misses one prayer and leaves it until the appointed time is over, with no excuse, is a kaafir. Claiming that one cannot find a place to pray is not a valid excuse, because either one is living on the face of the earth or not, and if one is living on the face of the earth, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The (whole) earth

has been made a mosque (or a place of prayer) and a means of purification for me, so wherever a man of my ummah may be when the time for prayer comes, let him pray." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, al-Fath, no. 335)

According to a report narrated by Muslim, he said: "The (whole) earth has been made good for me, a means of purification and a mosque (or place of prayer); so wherever a man may be when the time for prayer comes, let him pray wherever he is." (Saheeh Muslim, no. 521)

The entire world is a suitable place to prostrate oneself; the scholars have made no exceptions except very few, such as graveyards and lavatories. Wherever a Muslim is when the time for prayer comes, he should pray: in a mosque, if possible, or else in a hallway or park, on a sidewalk or in a parking lot, or in a corner of a store. Even if one can find no other place than a church, it is permissible to pray in it.

As far as praying on board means of transportation is concerned, then it is possible to pray there so long as the necessary conditions of prayer are fulfilled, or else one can wait until one gets out of the vehicle. If waiting means that the time for the prayer will pass, then you should pray in the best way that you can. Let us assume, for example, that you are in a car or train where there is no place to pray, you cannot stop and pray at the side of the road, and the time for that prayer is running out. In such a situation, the Muslim should pray in the best way that he can, even if he is sitting in his seat and even if he is not facing the qiblah, because Allaah says (interpretation of the

meaning): "So keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him as much as you can..." [al-Taghaabun 64:16], and because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "If I have commanded you to do something, do as much of it as you can." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, al-Fath, no. 7288)

An exception to be above is naafil (supererogatory) prayers offered when riding a camel, which is permissible even if one cannot get down or if one is not facing the qiblah. This is known from the report of Ibn 'Umar, who said: "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to pray when travelling on his camel, no matter which direction it was facing, and he would gesture with his head to indicate the movements of the night prayer, apart from the obligatory prayers, and he would pray with on his camel too." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 945)

Ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to pray voluntary (nafl) prayers when riding on his camel, no matter what direction it was facing, when he came from Makkah to Madeenah." Then Ibn 'Umar recited this aayah (interpretation of the meaning): "And to Allaah belong the east and the west, so wherever you turn yourselves or your faces, there is the Face of Allaah (and He is High above, over His Throne)..." [al-Baqarah 2:115]

Ibn 'Umar said: "It was concerning this that this aayah was revealed." (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, 2883; he said, this is a saheeh hasan hadeeth)

We should not forget to point out here that Muslims living in non-Muslim countries sometimes delay or abandon their prayers for another, completely different, reason, which is that they feel too embarrassed to pray in front of the kuffaar in public or open places, or they are afraid that they will make fun of them and regard them as odd. This is a serious mistake. How can a Muslim feel embarrassed about proclaiming the truth and worshipping openly, hastening to fulfil the command of Allaah at the time when Allaah has said it is to be done? This matter has been dealt with in a similar question on this website (see question # 980). We ask Allaah to help us all to remember Him, to be grateful to Him and to worship Him properly.

Sometimes I get a headache and I cannot pray except by means of gestures. I do not prostrate because of this headache with which I cannot prostrate. What is the ruling on this?

(Responded by Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baaz)

Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“So keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him as much as you can”

[al-Taghaabun 64:16]

“Allaah burdens not a person beyond his scope”

[al-Baqarah 2:286]

So if a person has a pain in his head which makes it difficult for him to prostrate on the ground and he will be harmed by that, there is nothing wrong with him making gestures, and his gesture for prostration should be deeper

than his gesture for bowing. There is nothing wrong with him bowing and prostrating in gestures, but his prostration should be deeper than his bowing, if it is too difficult for him to prostrate on the ground because of pain in his head or other sicknesses which prevent him from prostrating.

How can a pregnant women pray if she cannot complete all parts of salah in correct manner?

(Response by Sheikh Salih Al-Munajjid)

The basic principle concerning the prayer of one who is sick is that he should do whatever he is able to of the essential parts of the prayer, and he does not have to do what he is unable to do. This is indicated by a great deal of evidence from the Qur'aan and Sunnah. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“So keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him as much as you can”

[al-Taghaabun 64:16]

“Allaah burdens not a person beyond his scope”

[al-Baqarah 2:286]

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “If I command you to do a thing, then do as much of it as you can.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 7288; Muslim, 1337.

It was narrated that ‘Imraan ibn Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: “I was suffering from haemorrhoids and I asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) about praying. He said, ‘Pray standing, and if you cannot, then sitting down, and if you cannot, then lying on your side.’” Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 1117.

Based on the above, if you are able to pray standing up then you have to stand. Then if you become unable to stand or it is too difficult for you to stand, then you can sit down whilst praying.

It is permissible to sit on a chair or on the ground, depending on what you are able to do and what is easy for you. But it is better to sit on the ground, because the Sunnah is for a person to sit cross-legged in the place where one would stand and bow, and this is not easy to do on a chair.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said:

If a person cannot pray standing, he should pray sitting, but it is better to sit cross-legged in the place of standing and bowing.

From his essay, *Tahaarat al-Mareed wa Salaatuhu*

This sitting cross-legged is not obligatory; he may sit however he wants because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “If he cannot then sitting,” and he did not explain how he should sit.

See al-Sharh al-Mumti', 4/462.

If it is too difficult for you to prostrate and bow, then you can lean forward and make the leaning for sujood deeper than that for rukoo'.

If you can stand, then lean forward for rukoo' whilst standing, and lean forward for sujood whilst sitting, then you should do that, because standing is closer to bowing than sitting, and sitting is closer to sujood than standing.

Shaykh Ibn Baaz said:

Whoever is able to stand but is unable to bow or prostrate is not relieved of the obligation to stand, rather he should pray standing up, then lean forward for rukoo' (i.e., whilst standing) then sit and lean forward for sujood... and he should make leaning for sujood deeper than that for rukoo'. If he is only unable to prostrate then he should do rukoo' and then lean forward for sujood.

If during the prayer the sick person becomes able to do something that he was unable to do, such as standing, sitting, bowing or prostrating, he should start to do that and continue from whatever he has already completed of his prayer.

From his essay Ahkaam Salaat al-Mareed wa Tahaaratihi.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen said:

Whoever is not able to bow should lean forward whilst standing, and whoever is not able to prostrate should lean forward whilst sitting.

Al-Sharh al-Mumti', 4/475

And Allaah knows best.

How can a patient who has a catheter do wudoo' and pray?

(Response by Sheikh Salih Al-Munajjid)

Prayer is obligatory for the Muslim whatever state he is in, so long as he remains of sound mind. If a person is sick but is able to pray standing, then he should pray standing; if he cannot, then he should pray sitting; if he is unable to do that, then he should pray lying on his side; if he cannot do that then he should pray lying on his back, because of the report narrated by al-Bukhaari (1066) from 'Imraan ibn Husayn, who said: I had haemorrhoids, so I asked the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and he said: "Pray standing, and if you cannot, then (pray) sitting, and if you cannot then (pray) on your side." The ruling concerning purification is similar. If he is able to do wudoo' with water, then he should do that; if he cannot do that, then he should do tayammum, using dust.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about the patient who has a catheter: how should he pray and how should he do wudoo'?

He replied: He should pray according to his situation, like the one who is incontinent and like the woman who is

suffering from istihaadah (non-menstrual vaginal bleeding). The sick person should pray according to his situation when the time of the prayer begins. He should do tayammum if he is unable to use water, but if he is able to do that then he must do wudoo' with water, because Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“So keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him as much as you can”

[al-Taghaabun 64:16].

And anything that comes out after that will not matter, but he should not do wudoo' until the time for that prayer begins, and he may pray regardless of anything that comes out, so long as it is within the time of that prayer, even if urine is coming out of his penis; the same applies to the woman who is suffering from istihaadah: she may pray within the time of the prayer, even if it comes out of her for a long time. So she should pray according to her situation. But the one whose condition means that he is continually breaking his wudoo' should not do wudoo' until the time for it begins, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said to the woman who was suffering istihaadah: “Do wudoo' at the time for every prayer.” So the one who is incontinent, the woman who is suffering istihaadah and the patient asked about here may offer prayers at the time for every prayer, both obligatory and naafil, read Qur'aan from the Mushaf and circumambulate the Ka'bah (tawaaf), if they are in Makkah at that time. But when the time for that prayer ends, they should refrain from these actions until they

have done wudoo' for the prayer whose time has now begun. End quote.

Al-Fataawa al-Muta'alliqah bi'l-Tibb wa Ahkaam al-Marda (p.34).

And Allah knows best.

How can a person who is partially paralyzed do wudoo' and pray?

(Response by Sheikh Salih Al-Munajjid)

Firstly: purification of the sick person

1. The sick person has the same obligations as a healthy person with regard to purification with water from minor and major impurity, so he should do wudoo' in the case of minor impurity and ghusl in the case of major impurity.

2. Before doing wudoo', it is essential to clean oneself with water (istinja') or with stones or whatever takes their place, after urinating or defecating.

When cleaning oneself with stones, it is essential to use three clean stones. It is not permissible to clean oneself with dung, bones or food, or anything that is respectable. The best is to clean oneself with stones and the like, such as tissue and so on, then to follow that with water, because the stones remove the impurity itself and the water purifies the place, so that is best.

One has the choice between cleaning oneself with water or with stones and the like. If he wants to limit it to just one of the two, then water is better, because it purifies the

place and it removes the impurity itself and its traces, so it is more effective in cleaning. If he limits himself to stones, then three stones are sufficient if the place becomes clean after that; if that is not sufficient then he may add a fourth or a fifth, until he has cleaned the place, but it is better to stick to an odd number.

It is not permissible to clean oneself with the right hand, but if the left-hand is cut off, or it is broken or diseased and the like, then he may clean himself with his right hand on the basis of necessity, and there is nothing wrong with that.

3. If the sick person cannot do wudoo' with water because he is unable to, or because he is afraid that it will make his sickness worse or delay his recovery, then he should do tayammum. Tayammum means striking his hands on pure dust once, then wiping his face with the inside of his fingers and palms.

It is permissible to do tayammum using anything pure on which there is dust, even if it is not the ground, such as if the dust can fly off a wall or the like, it is permissible to use it for tayammum. If he remains in a state of purity from the first tayammum, he may pray with it, as is the case with wudoo', even if that is several prayers, and he does not have to renew his tayammum, because it is an alternative to water, and the alternative comes under the same ruling as the thing it replaces.

Tayammum is invalidated by everything which invalidates wudoo', and it becomes invalidated as soon as

one becomes able to use water or water becomes available, if it was not available.

4. If the sickness is minor, and there is no fear that using water will cause harm or cause severe sickness or delay recovery or increase the pain or cause anything harmful, such as headaches, toothache and the like, or the patient can use warm water and will not be harmed by it -- in these cases it is not permissible to do tayammum, because it is permitted in order to ward off harm, but there is no harm in these cases, and because he can find water, so he is obliged to use it.

5. If it is too difficult for the sick person to do wudoo' or tayammum himself, someone else should do wudoo' or tayammum for him, and that is acceptable.

6. If a person has wounds or ulcers or broken limbs or any sickness in which using water would harm him, and he becomes junub, it is permissible for him to do tayammum. If he is able to wash the sound parts of his body, he must do that and do tayammum for the rest.

7. If a person has a wound in one of the parts of the body that are washed during wudoo', if washing it with water is too difficult for him or will harm him, he may wipe it with water instead of washing the injured part, according to the normal sequence of wudoo'. If it is too difficult for him to wipe it or if doing so will harm him, he may do tayammum for it, and that is acceptable.

8. For the one who is wearing a dressing -- which means that there is a bad break in one of his limbs and it is

wrapped up or the like -- he may wipe over it with water and that is sufficient, even if he was not in a state of purity when he put it on.

9. When the sick person wants to pray, he must strive to make sure that his body, clothes and the place where he wants to pray are free of impurities, but if he cannot do that, he should pray as he is, and there is no blame on him.

10. If the sick person is affected by urinary incontinence and has not recovered with treatment, then he must clean himself (istinja') and do wudoo' for every prayer after the time for it begins, and he must wash off whatever has got onto his body or clothes, or put on clean clothes for prayer if it is not too difficult for him to do so, otherwise he is pardoned, but he should take precautions to prevent the spread of urine on his clothes or body or the place of his prayer, by putting a cloth over the head of the penis.

Secondly: prayer of the sick person

1. The sick person must pray standing as much as he can.

2. If he cannot stand, then he may pray sitting, but it is better for him to sit crossed legged at the times when one normally stands during prayer.

3. If he is unable to pray sitting, he may pray lying on his side facing towards the qiblah. It is mustahabb for him to lie on his right side.

4. If he is unable to pray on his side, he may pray lying on his back with his feet towards the qiblah.

5. If a person is able to stand but he is unable to bow or prostrate, then standing is not waived in his case; rather he should pray standing, and lean forward for rukoo', then sit and lean forward for sujood.

6. If there is some sickness in his eye, and a trustworthy doctor has told him, "if you pray lying on your back then it will heal, otherwise it will not," then he may pray lying on his back.

7. If he is unable to bow and prostrate, he may lean forward for them, and he should lean lower for prostration than for bowing.

8. If he is unable to prostrate only, then he should bow and lean forward for prostration.

9. If he cannot bend his back, he should bend his neck, and if his back is bent so that it is as if he is bowing, then when he wants to bow he should lean forward a little, and make his face as near to the ground as he can when prostrating.

10. If he cannot tilt his head forward, he should say takbeer and recite Qur'aan, and intend in his heart the standing, bowing, rising, prostration, rising, sitting between the two prostrations and sitting to recite the tashahhud, and he should recite all the prescribed adhkaar. As for what some sick people do of gesturing with the finger, there is no basis for it.

11. If the sick person becomes able, during his prayer, to do something that he was unable to do, such as standing, sitting, bowing, prostrating or leaning forward, he should start to do that and continue from what he has already done of his prayer.

12. If the sick person or anyone else sleeps and misses a prayer, or he forgets it, he must pray it when he wakes up from his sleep or when he remembers it, and it is not permissible for him to leave it until the time for the same prayer begins (the next day) and then pray it.

13. It is not permissible to stop praying under any circumstances, rather the accountable person must be keen to pray in all circumstances, whether he is healthy or sick, because it is the pillar of the faith and the most important obligation after the twin testimony of faith. So it is not permissible for the Muslim to fail to offer an obligatory prayer until the time for it has ended, even if he is sick, so long as he is of sound mind. Rather he must offer it at the proper time according to what he is able to do on the basis of the details mentioned above. As for what some sick people do of delaying prayers until they recover from their sickness, this is something that is not permitted and there is no basis for it in sharee'ah.

14. If it is too hard for the sick person to offer every prayer on time, then he may join Zuhr and 'Asr, and Maghrib and 'Isha', at the time of the earlier or later prayer, according to what is easy for him. If he wishes he may join 'Asr with Zuhr at the time of Zuhr, or if he wishes he may delay Zuhr and join it with 'Asr; if he

wishes he may join 'Isha' with Maghrib at the time of Maghrib, or he may delay Maghrib and join it with 'Isha'.

As for Fajr, it cannot be joined with the prayer before it or after it, because its time is separate from the times of the prayers that come before and after it.

And Allaah is the source of strength. May Allaah send blessings and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad and his family and Companions.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn 'Abd-Allaah ibn Baaz, Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez Aal al-Shaykh, Shaykh 'Abd-Allaah ibn Ghadyaan, Shaykh Saalih al-Fawzaan, Shaykh Bakr Abu Zayd

(Response by Sheikh Salih Al-Munajjid on another occasion)

Firstly:

If a person is sick and cannot bring water and do wudoo' with it, or he is incapable of moving, his situation should be examined further:

If there is someone who can bring water at the time of prayer and help him to do wudoo', then wudoo' is obligatory in his case.

If there is no one who can help him do wudoo', then it is prescribed for him to do tayammum in that case, and he comes under the same ruling as one who does not have any water and cannot find any.

That is because Allaah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“So keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him as much as you can”

[al-Taghaabun 64:16]

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “If I command you do a thing, do as much of it as you can.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (7277); Muslim (1337).

Ibn Qudaamah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Mughni (1/151):

If a person is sick and unable to move, and there is no one who can bring him water, then he is like one who has no water, because he has no way to obtain any water. So he is like one who finds a well but has no means of drawing water from it.

If he has someone who can bring him water before the time for prayer ends, then he is like one who can find water, because he is in the same position as one who finds something with which to draw water within that time.

If he is afraid that the time will end before he comes, then Ibn Abi Moosa said: he may do tayammum, and he does not have to repeat wudoo'. This is the view of al-Hasan, because he is without water during the time for prayer, so he is exactly like one who has no water. End quote.

Al-Mardaawi said in al-Insaaf (1/265):

If the sick person is unable to move and there is no one to do wudoo' for him, then he comes under the same ruling as one who has no water.

If he fears that the time for prayer will end if he waits for someone to do wudoo' for him, he should do tayammum and pray, and he does not have to repeat it according to the correct view. End quote.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in Sharh al-'Umdah (1/433-434):

If he is not able to use water because he is unable to move to where the water is, and he does not have anyone to bring water to him, then he is like one who has no water. If he has someone who can bring water to him within the time (for the prayer), then he is like one who has water. End quote.

It says in al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah (14/260):

The one who is incapacitated and cannot use water should do tayammum, and he does not have to repeat it, like one who is forced, detained or tied up near water, or one who is afraid of animals, whether he is travelling or not, because he comes under the same ruling as one who has no water. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Clean earth is a means of purification for the Muslim, even if he cannot find water for ten years. When he finds water, he should let it touch his skin, for that is good." End quote.

Secondly:

If he is able to wash some of the parts of the body that are washed in wudoo', but his sickness prevents him from washing the rest, then he has to wash whatever he can of the parts that are washed in wudoo', and he should do tayammum instead of the parts that he cannot wash. This has been explained in the answer to question no. 67614.

Thirdly:

With regard to how tayammum is done:

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen said in al-Sharh al-Mumti' (1/488):

In my view, how it is to be done in accordance with the Sunnah is as follows: he should strike the earth with his hands once, without spreading the fingers, and wipe his face with his hands, then he should wipe one hand with the other. Thus tayammum will be completed. End quote.

It has been described in detail in question no. 21074.

Fourthly:

If a sick person who is unable to use water does tayammum, then it becomes easier for him to use water after he has finished his prayer, he does not have to repeat it, because he has done what is required of him and what he is commanded to do.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said in Sharh al-'Umdah (1/425):

Because Allaah enjoined one prayer at a specific time which is to be done according to what one is able to do, and the condition is waived in the event that one is unable to fulfil it. The words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), “Clean earth is a means of purification for the Muslim” and “Soil is sufficient for you” indicate that it takes the place of water in all cases. End quote.

Fifthly:

The scholars differed with regard to doing tayammum by striking the walls of one's house, based on their differences of opinion as to the meaning of the verse in which Allaah says (Interpretation of the meaning):

“perform Tayammum with clean earth”

[al-Nisa' 4:43]

The correct view is that what is meant by sa'eed (clean earth) is the face of the earth, whether it is dirt, sand or stones, etc.

Based on this, if the wall is not covered with anything, then it is permissible to use it for tayammum, whether there is dust on it or not, because it is made of clean earth. But if it is covered with wood or paint, then this wood or paint is not sa'eed (clean earth) and it is not valid to use it for tayammum, unless there is dust on it, because dust comes under the heading of sa'eed.

Sixthly:

With regard to the way in which a sick person who is unable to move should pray:

It says in al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah (26/208):

The sick person or the one who is suffering partial paralysis should do those pillars (essential parts) of the prayer that he is able to, according to the majority of fuqaha', because the one who is unable to do something is not obliged to do it. If he is unable to stand, he may pray sitting and he should bow and prostrate. If he is unable to do that, then he should pray sitting and lean forward for bowing and prostration, leaning more for prostration than bowing. If he is unable to sit, then he should lie down and use gestures, because the essential parts are waived if one is unable to do them, and he should do as much as he is able.

'Imraan ibn Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: I fell sick and the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) visited me and said: "Pray standing, and if you cannot, then sitting, and if you cannot, then lying on your side, making gestures." End quote.

Shaykh Saalih al-Fawzaan was asked: I have a father who is sick and paralyzed on the left side of his body, which he is completely unable to move. Hence he cannot walk or move or do anything for himself or relieve himself. This has been the case for ten years. But three or four months ago this sickness got even worse. Is it

permissible for him to stop praying for this reason, because he cannot purify himself for prayer?

If it is not permissible, how should he purify himself and pray?

What should he do about the prayers that he missed in the past because of his sickness, because he thought that so long as he was like that, he was excused from praying?

He replied:

The Muslim is not excused from praying so long as he is of sound mind, but he should pray according to his situation, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“So keep your duty to Allaah and fear Him as much as you can”

[al-Taghaabun 64:16]

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Pray standing, and if you cannot, then sitting, and if you cannot, then lying on your side.”

If your father who is stricken with paralysis can do wudoo’ by himself using his sound hand, or if someone else can help him to do wudoo’, then he must do that.

If he is not able to do wudoo’ using water, then he must do tayammum using earth.

If he cannot do tayammum by himself, then someone else should do tayammum for him: one of his family who

is taking care of him or one of those who are present should strike his hands on the ground, and wipe his face and hands, intending that to be a purification for him, then he should pray according to his situation, sitting or lying on his side, gesturing with his head for bowing and prostrating, according to what he is able to do.

If he cannot gesture with his head because of the paralysis, then he may indicate bowing and prostrating with his eyes.

Religion is easy, praise be to Allaah, but that does not mean that he should give up praying altogether. Rather he should pray according to his situation as we have described. And he has to make up the prayers that he missed, as best he can. End quote.

Al-Muntaqa min Fataawa al-Fawzaan (4/no. 27)

And Allaah knows best.